

GUYRA DEMANDS ITS SHIRE BACK - COMMUNITY MEETING 15 Nov 2018

Two years on from the forced merger of Guyra Shire and Armidale Dumaresq Shire, the Guyra community continues to call for de-amalgamation.



[Prime7 News North West 9 Nov 18](#)

The 'Save and Grow Guyra' group has called a Community Meeting for Thursday 15 November 2018 at the Guyra Bowling Club. Gordon Youman, a member of the group, is still angry. "It comes back to democracy and our rights. We are fighting to get our Shire back. Since the merger Guyra has been forgotten. Our representation within the new merged council is limited and services are lacking."



[The Guyra Argus 13 Nov 18](#)

The most essential thing about a local community with its own elected council is that it should be based upon a sense of identity, and a sense of belonging. That is why many communities forced to merge want to [#DemergeNow](#)"

All political parties, except the Liberal/National coalition, support the holding of a referendum to enable a community forced to merge to decide if it wants its council back.



[The Guyra Argus 13 Nov 18](#)

In October 2018, two think-tanks – the “free-market” Institute of Public Affairs, and the “progressive” Per Capita Australia – identified ‘NSW local council amalgamations’ as one of the worst of the 20 policies they investigated in Australia.

Their *Evidence Based Policy Research Project* deemed the process “unacceptable”, with a score of only 2.5 out of 10. See [summary](#) of the research.



Phil Jenkyn OAM, a member of 'Save Our Councils Coalition', is a guest speaker at the community meeting and will outline a five-step plan for Guyra to get its council back. "It's a total disgrace, the whole process of forced amalgamations has been found to be fatally flawed, so how can the Government argue against you having the right to have a referendum to decide the issue."

[NBN News 15 Nov 2018](#)

A large crowd turned up at the meeting on the evening of 15 November. Many felt betrayed by the State Liberal/National coalition, and were angry that they had not been listened to over the forced council amalgamation.



There were a number of speakers followed by a Q&A session. Speakers included Gordon Youman and Robert Gordon from the 'Save and Grow Guyra' group and guest speaker Phil Jenkyn from 'Save Our Councils Coalition'. There were also a number of speakers from the floor including Debra O'Brien from Country Labor.

Gordon Youman said that "we have been told lies by this Government – the whole process of forcing amalgamations was flawed." Robert Gordon added that "the Guyra community rose to the occasion with all those protest meetings and submissions that we made, but the Government failed to listen and is still failing to listen to us."

Phil Jenkyn addressed the meeting: "A local council is best able to make decisions about the needs of its local community, not large bureaucratic organisations or politicians in Macquarie Street."

"The State Government should do its job and properly fund rural roads and major infrastructure."

"There has never been worse policy development in this country than the Baird forced amalgamations policy, as demonstrated by recent research."

"To get your council back will require initially a petition of 10% of enrolled voters from the forcibly merged area, followed by a successful referendum. However, to get this you will

need to change the Government.”

“You can’t vote for the Liberal/National coalition at the next State election if you want your council back.”

Debra O’Brien confirmed that Labor will support a referendum for Guyra and said that “there is strong support across NSW for local communities forcibly merged to get their councils back if they want, as was shown by the resolution unanimously passed at the recent annual Local Government conference.”



[The Armidale Express 20 Nov 18](#)

Mr Youman said UNE studies had shown no evidence whatsoever that forced amalgamations worked, on the contrary, he said they had sent towns backwards.

“Barraba is a very, very good example. It was forced to merge in 2004 with devastating results on the community there,” he said.

A [video](#) (11min) containing short grabs from a number of speakers at the meeting has been placed on Facebook.

See the [SOCC Five Point Plan to Demerge](#) as to how to get your council back.

Various expert reports on forced council amalgamations are summarised in a [SOCC Report](#) dated 27 Nov 2018. These include recent studies on the negative impacts that forced mergers are having on the communities of Barraba and Guyra.

Save Our Councils Coalition

28 Nov 2018